



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Flood Control Maintenance Project Proposed for Petaluma Valley and Upper Sonoma Creek Watersheds**

**Santa Rosa, CA** – A flood control maintenance project is being proposed by the Sonoma County Water Agency to reduce flood risk and avoid erosion on creeks and channels in the Petaluma Valley and Upper Sonoma Creek watersheds. The project would be implemented mainly on private property at a landowners' request when a creek blockage is causing — or is likely to cause — bank erosion.

The “Zones 2A and 3A Natural Channels Maintenance Project” would allow for small-scale maintenance activities in the Petaluma and Sonoma areas that are within the boundaries of Flood Control Zones 2A and 3A. Many of the creeks in these zones are natural channels where the Water Agency does not currently have flood control maintenance easements. The Water Agency receives regular requests to clear debris and blockages from landowners with property on these creeks.

This project would allow the Water Agency to respond to landowner requests if these conditions were met:

- If no endangered or threatened species or their habitat are present;
- The project simply involves the removal of debris or a blockage that could lead to flooding or erosion; and
- Is limited to minor bank repairs to address erosion using biotechnical erosion control measures, which use vegetation and natural structural materials, such as boulders and root wads.



An example of a qualifying project would be if a tree has fallen into a creek and its branches are trapping material, causing a blockage and causing erosion. Following an environmental assessment that finds no impacted species, a Water Agency maintenance crew would either remove or trim the tree to eliminate the blockage. Biodegradable erosion mats would be installed to reduce erosion, and the eroded areas would be replanted with native plants to stabilize the bank and provide shade.

The Water Agency has prepared an Initial Study and Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact (IS/ND) for the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Public Comment period for the IS/ND opened on December 23, 2015 and will close on January 27, 2016. An electronic copy of the IS/ND is available at [www.sonomacountywater.org/stream-maintenance-program](http://www.sonomacountywater.org/stream-maintenance-program). Hard copies are available for viewing at the Petaluma Regional Library, 100 Fairgrounds Dr., Petaluma, Sonoma Valley Regional Library, 755 W. Napa St., Sonoma, and at the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Blvd., Santa Rosa.

The Project is scheduled for consideration and adoption before the Water Agency Board of Directors on February 9, 2016 in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 575 Administration Dr., Room 102A, Santa Rosa, CA. Comments on the Project should be submitted by e-mail to [dcook@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:dcook@scwa.ca.gov) or mailed to David Cook, c/o Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Blvd., Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

For additional information about the project, contact Jon Niehaus, at 521-1845 or email to: [Jon.Niehaus@scwa.ca.gov](mailto:Jon.Niehaus@scwa.ca.gov)

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*The Sonoma County Water Agency is working to secure our future by investing in our water resources, community and environment. The Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org).*